

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 24

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE ON A STUDY OF THE COST AND IMPACT OF CHRONIC DISEASE ON THE NEW MEXICO WORK FORCE AND THE POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT OF BUSINESS-BASED WELLNESS PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, chronic disease is known to lead to absenteeism and lost wages and contributes to higher health insurance premiums, with a combined result of a higher cost of doing business; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and prevention acknowledges that the United States cannot effectively address the escalating cost of health care without addressing the problem of chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and

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1 prevention estimates that more than fifty percent of Americans  
2 have at least one chronic disease, accounting for up to  
3 seventy-five percent of the nation's health care costs, which  
4 currently exceed two trillion dollars (\$2,000,000,000,000); and

5 WHEREAS, arthritis, diabetes and obesity are prevalent  
6 chronic diseases or chronic conditions, the incidence of which  
7 are increasing; and

8 WHEREAS, the department of health reports that an  
9 estimated four hundred fifteen thousand people in the state are  
10 afflicted with arthritis, costing more than six hundred eighty-  
11 six million dollars (\$686,000,000) per year in direct and  
12 indirect costs; and

13 WHEREAS, the department of health estimates that one  
14 hundred twenty thousand people in New Mexico have diabetes and  
15 that more than one in two adults with diabetes are overweight  
16 or obese and do not participate in regular exercise; and

17 WHEREAS, according to the department of health, fifty-  
18 seven percent of adults, twenty-four percent of high school  
19 students and twenty-two percent of low-income children who  
20 participate in federally funded food programs are overweight or  
21 obese; and

22 WHEREAS, according to a report published by the Millikin  
23 Institute titled *An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of*  
24 *Chronic Disease*, the economic burden of chronic disease in New  
25 Mexico will total twenty-four billion dollars (\$24,000,000,000)

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1 between 2003 and 2023 if nothing is done to address chronic  
2 disease; and

3 WHEREAS, the Millikin Institute report estimates that New  
4 Mexico can save up to six billion dollars (\$6,000,000,000) of  
5 the twenty-four billion dollars (\$24,000,000,000) total  
6 economic burden by addressing chronic disease through such  
7 measures as reducing obesity, reducing smoking, increasing  
8 physical activity, reducing cholesterol levels and instituting  
9 preventive medical care; and

10 WHEREAS, numerous businesses in New Mexico and the nation,  
11 including Astrazeneca, Johnson and Johnson, Don Chalmers Ford,  
12 New Mexico mutual and casualty, the Bell group and Sandia  
13 national laboratories, have demonstrated positive results and  
14 reductions in manifestations of chronic disease factors with  
15 implementation of business-based wellness programs; and

16 WHEREAS, these organizations report that they have  
17 improved their return on investments with their investment in  
18 business-based wellness programs; and

19 WHEREAS, broader opportunity exists to extend these  
20 positive results to businesses and to the state of New Mexico,  
21 resulting in healthier employees and cost savings;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the  
24 economic development department be requested to collaborate on  
25 a study of the cost and impact of chronic disease on the New

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1 Mexico work force and the potential positive impact of  
2 business-based wellness programs; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify programs  
4 and projects, including business-based wellness programs, that  
5 could diminish the negative impact of chronic disease and  
6 improve the overall health of the population of the state; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and  
8 recommendations of the study be presented to the interim  
9 legislative health and human services committee by November 1,  
10 2009; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
12 transmitted to the secretaries of health and economic  
13 development.

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